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FROM TERRORIST EVENT TO POLITICAL EFFECT: AN ANALYTICAL MODEL OF THE POLITICAL CONSEQUENCES OF TERRORISM****

Abstract

The paper analyzes the relationship between a terrorist event and its political effect. It starts from the assumption that the immediate characteristics of a terrorist attack, such as the number of victims, target selection, mode of execution, and symbolic value of the attacked object, do not provide a sufficient explanation of its political consequences. The main aim of the paper is to formulate an analytical model that explains the political effect of a terrorist event as an outcome of the interaction between institutional, political, and social determinants. In this model,

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the terrorist event is treated as the initial analytical unit, while the political effect is treated as the dependent outcome to be explained. The model is empirically examined through a comparative analysis of three cases: the terrorist attacks in the United States on September 11, 2001, the Madrid attacks of March 11, 2004, and the Norway attacks of July 22, 2011. The analysis shows that the different political outcomes of these events can be explained more consistently by examining institutional responses, political definitions of the threat, and social interpretations of the attack than by relying solely on the immediate characteristics of the terrorist events themselves.

Keywords: terrorism, terrorist event, political effect, political consequences, institutional determinants, political determinants, social determinants, security policy, comparative analysis

INTRODUCTION: RESEARCH PROBLEM AND ANALYTICAL STARTING POINT

Terrorism represents one of the most significant challenges facing contemporary states, not only because of the immediate security consequences it produces, but also because of the political effects that may arise in the aftermath of a terrorist event. The number of victims, the mode of execution, target selection, and the symbolic value of the attacked object determine the immediate gravity of a terrorist act, but they do not always explain its ultimate political significance (Kydd and Walter 2006; Godefroidt 2023; Nagel, Nivette and Czymara 2024). Historical experience shows that terrorist events of similar operational intensity may produce different political consequences: ranging from a limited security response to changes in legislation, public attitudes, electoral behaviour or institutional trust as well as the reorganization of the security sector, shifts in foreign policy priorities, or a lasting reshaping of the relationship between the state and its citizens (Crenshaw 1981; Boin, 't Hart and McConnell 2009; Berrebi and Klor 2008; Rees and Smith 2022; Godefroidt 2023; Peri, Rees and Smith 2023; Nagel, Nivette and Czymara 2024; Petrović and Rašković Talović 2024).

Contemporary terrorism studies have developed numerous theoretical approaches that enable a better understanding of the causes

of terrorism, processes of radicalization, organizational forms of terrorist groups, their operational strategies, and their methods of target selection (Crenshaw 1981; Hoffman 2006; Rapoport 2004; Schmid 2011). At the same time, the existence of extensive international databases has made it possible for a more systematic empirical analysis of terrorist events (National Consortium for the Study of Terrorism and Responses to Terrorism [START] 2022). As a result, terrorism is now relatively well researched as a form of political violence, a strategy of coercion, a communicative act, and a security threat (Pape 2005; Kydd and Walter 2006; Godefroidt 2023; Freilich *et al.* 2024). However, the question of how a specific terrorist event becomes politically relevant to an extent that exceeds its immediate consequences remains insufficiently clarified.

The basic research problem of this paper arises from the disproportion between the immediate characteristics of a terrorist event and its ultimate political effect. Some terrorist attacks become turning points in the development of security policy, legislation, and the institutional organization of the state, while others, although no less significant in terms of the scale of violence, remain confined to an operational or short-term security level. Such disproportion indicates that political effect cannot be derived directly from the number of victims, the type of target, or the mode of execution of the attack (Hoffman 2006; Abrahms 2006; Kydd and Walter 2006; Godefroidt 2023; Germann, Godefroidt and Mendez 2026). Between the terrorist event and its political consequences lies a specific analytical space that requires the examination of mediating factors.

The subject of this paper is the mechanism through which the political effect of a terrorist event is produced. Unlike approaches that place the analytical emphasis on the causes of terrorism, the motivation of perpetrators, the organizational structure of terrorist groups, or processes of radicalization, this paper takes the terrorist event as its initial analytical unit. The terrorist event is therefore not treated as the phenomenon to be explained, but as the starting point for analysing the processes that unfold after it. The object of explanation is not the attack itself, but the political effect shaped in the aftermath of its execution.

The basic assumption of the paper is that the political effect of a terrorist event is not its direct and automatic consequence. Rather, it arises as a result of the interaction between institutional, political, and social determinants that mediate between the immediate act of political violence and the political consequences that follow. Institutional determinants

refer to the capacity and mode of response of state institutions; political determinants refer to processes of political decision-making, threat definition, and public policy choice; while social determinants include media mediation of the event, the formation of public opinion, the perception of threat, and the level of trust in institutions.

The aim of the paper is to formulate an analytical model that enables a more systematic understanding of the relationship between a terrorist event and its political effect. This model does not seek to offer a general theory of terrorism, nor to replace existing approaches in the study of terrorist violence. Its purpose is more narrowly defined: to explain why terrorist events with similar immediate characteristics may produce different political consequences. In this sense, the paper shifts the analytical focus from the question of why a terrorist attack was carried out to the question of how and under what conditions such an attack acquires political significance.

The scientific contribution of the paper lies in the analytical separation of the terrorist event and the political effect as two distinct categories of scientific analysis. The terrorist event represents the initial analytical unit, while the political effect represents the dependent outcome to be explained. Between these two categories operates a system of institutional, political, and social determinants. It is precisely their interaction that makes it possible to analyse the political consequences of a terrorist event as a distinct object of research, rather than as the implied or mechanical continuation of the terrorist act itself.

Starting from this framework, the paper first examines the scope and limits of the most important theoretical approaches to terrorism, then formulates an analytical model of the political effect of a terrorist event, and subsequently applies it to a comparative analysis of three cases: the terrorist attacks in the United States on September 11, 2001, the attacks in Madrid on March 11, 2004, and the attack in Norway on July 22, 2011. The selection of these cases enables the testing of the paper's basic assumption: that the different political effects of terrorist events can be explained more consistently through the interaction of institutional, political, and social determinants than through the immediate characteristics of the attacks themselves.

THEORETICAL STARTING POINTS AND RESEARCH GAP

Contemporary terrorism studies have developed several influential theoretical approaches that have significantly contributed to the understanding of terrorism as a specific form of political violence. Their value lies in the fact that they no longer treat terrorism as an isolated criminal phenomenon or as an expression of irrational violence, but rather as a historical, political, organizational, and communicative phenomenon. Yet an analysis of their respective objects of inquiry shows that the political effect of an individual terrorist event is most often not their central analytical unit.

David Rapoport's wave theory places terrorism within a broader historical framework and shows that modern terrorism has developed through different historical phases, from the anarchist and anti-colonial waves to the left-wing and religious waves (Rapoport 2004, 46–73). This approach enables an understanding of the long-term evolution of terrorism, its ideological foundations, and its historical patterns. However, its analytical unit is not the individual terrorist event, but the historical wave of terrorism as a form of development of political violence. For this reason, the political processes that emerge after a specific terrorist event remain outside the central focus of this approach.

Martha Crenshaw analyses terrorism as a form of political choice. Her approach moves beyond simplified interpretations of terrorism as exclusively irrational or pathological behaviour and shows that terrorist organizations act within a framework of political calculations, available resources, and expected state responses. Terrorism is thus understood as a strategy of political action under conditions of limited opportunity (Crenshaw 1981, 385–386). Nevertheless, the focus of this approach lies in the processes that precede the terrorist event: in the decision to use terrorism as a means of political struggle. The political effects that follow the event itself are not the primary object of analysis.

Bruce Hoffman places particular emphasis on the communicative and symbolic dimension of terrorism. A terrorist act is not merely physical violence, but a message directed at a wider audience, whose purpose is to generate fear, psychological pressure, and political insecurity. This approach is important because it shows that the immediate victims are not the only target of the attack, but rather a means of producing a broader political effect (Hoffman 2006, 40–41). However, here too the

focus of analysis is on the nature of the terrorist act, its function, and its political purpose, rather than on the subsequent institutional, political, and social processes that determine its ultimate political effect.

Robert Pape places terrorism within the framework of a strategy of political coercion. His analysis is directed at the question of the conditions under which terrorist violence can compel a state to change its political behaviour. In this respect, Pape brings the analysis of terrorism closer to the question of political effectiveness. Yet the analytical unit of his approach is not the individual terrorist event, but terrorist strategy as an instrument of coercion (Pape 2005, 27–45). The consequences of a specific terrorist event are considered within the broader relationship between the terrorist organization and the state, rather than as an autonomous process requiring separate analytical explanation.

The synthetic approach of Alex P. Schmid is of particular importance for the conceptual grounding of terrorism studies. Schmid seeks to systematize different definitions, concepts, and approaches, starting from the fact that terrorism is a complex and multidimensional phenomenon. His contribution is especially important in terms of clearer conceptual differentiation and the interdisciplinary understanding of terrorism (Schmid 2011, 39–98). However, in this case as well, the object of analysis is terrorism as a complex social and political phenomenon, rather than the political effect of an individual terrorist event.

The foregoing overview does not imply that existing theories are incomplete or insufficient within the scope of their own research questions. On the contrary, their significance remains undisputed for understanding terrorism as a historical, political, organizational, communicative, and strategic phenomenon. However, they most often start from the questions of why terrorism emerges, how terrorist actors operate, which strategies they use, and what kind of political message they seek to produce. Less attention is devoted to the question of how a specific terrorist event, once it occurs, is translated into institutional, political, and social consequences.

More recent research has increasingly focused on the political and social consequences of terrorist attacks. Studies show that terrorism may influence political attitudes and public opinion, although the magnitude, direction, and duration of these effects vary considerably across contexts (Godefroidt 2023; Nagel, Nivette and Czymara 2024; Germann, Godefroidt and Mendez 2026). Existing research indicates that post-attack responses may involve changes in institutional trust,

perceptions of security and threat, attitudes toward out-groups, and public support for restrictive counterterrorism measures. At the same time, these reactions are neither uniform nor automatic. Their intensity may depend on the characteristics of the attack, the broader political and social context, the timing of measurement, and the way in which the event is interpreted and communicated to the public (Godefroidt 2023; Epifanio, Giani and Ivandic 2023; Nagel, Nivette and Czymara 2024; Germann, Godefroidt and Mendez 2026). This heterogeneity suggests that the political consequences of terrorism should not be understood simply as direct responses to the attack itself, but as outcomes shaped by processes that unfold after the event. Existing studies, however, tend to examine particular dimensions of this post-attack process, such as public attitudes, media dynamics, political framing, institutional trust, or policy responses, rather than systematically examining how these dimensions interact within a single analytical framework (Boin, 't Hart and McConnell 2009; Godefroidt 2023; Epifanio, Giani and Ivandic 2023; Volker 2024; Germann, Godefroidt and Mendez 2026). Consequently, there remains a need for an analytical approach that connects institutional, political, and social responses and examines their combined role in shaping the broader political effect of a terrorist event.

It is precisely here that the research gap of this paper opens. While previous studies provide important insights into individual institutional, political, and social consequences of terrorist attacks, less attention has been devoted to their interaction as part of a common post-attack process. The present study, therefore, focuses on the mediating space between the terrorist event and its broader political effect, in which institutional responses, political interpretation, and social reactions interact and jointly shape the political consequences of the event. Starting from this premise, this paper does not seek to explain terrorism as a whole, nor to offer a new general theory of terrorist violence. Its starting point is narrower and more analytically defined: the individual terrorist event is treated as the initial analytical unit, while the political effect is treated as the outcome to be explained. This shift in focus makes it possible to analyse the political consequences of a terrorist event as the result of the interaction between institutional, political, and social determinants, rather than as a direct, linear, or implied consequence of the act of violence itself.

ANALYTICAL MODEL OF THE POLITICAL EFFECT OF A TERRORIST EVENT

The starting point of the proposed analytical model is the distinction between the terrorist event and the political effect as two analytically connected, yet distinct, categories. Conventional interpretations of terrorist violence often assume that there is a direct relationship between the intensity of an attack and its political consequences. According to such an understanding, a more severe attack should produce a stronger political effect, while a more limited attack should remain within the boundaries of a narrower security response. However, empirical research suggests that the political and social consequences of terrorist attacks are neither uniform nor necessarily proportional to the immediate severity of the event, but vary considerably across political, institutional and social contexts (Abrahms 2006; Kydd and Walter 2006; Mueller 2005; Peri, Rees and Smith 2023; Godefroidt 2023; Nagel, Nivette and Czymara 2024; Germann, Godefroidt and Mendez 2026). Terrorist events with similar immediate characteristics may produce different political outcomes, while events of different operational intensity may sometimes lead to comparable political consequences (Bali 2007; Montalvo 2011; Berrebi and Klor 2008; Kearns, Betus and Lemieux 2019).

For this reason, the terrorist event is not treated in this paper as the final explanation of its own political consequences. It represents the initial analytical unit, that is, the immediate act of political violence that triggers a series of institutional, political, and social reactions. A terrorist event is understood here as a concrete act of intentional use, or threat of use, of violence in pursuit of a political, ideological, or religiously motivated objective (Institute for Economics & Peace 2022, 7). At this level of analysis, its immediate characteristics are relevant: the place and time of execution, target selection, the number of victims, the means employed, the organizational pattern, and responsibility for the attack. Nevertheless, these characteristics have the status of initial conditions of analysis, rather than a sufficient explanation of political effect.

The political effect of a terrorist event denotes subsequently generated political consequences that can be linked to the terrorist attack, but cannot be mechanically derived from its immediate characteristics. It may be manifested through changes in legislation, the reorganization of the security sector, the establishment of new institutions, shifts in public policy, changes in foreign policy orientation, electoral consequences,

or a more lasting reshaping of the relationship between the state and its citizens (Kydd and Walter 2006; Abrahms 2006; Berrebi and Klor 2008; Boin, 't Hart and McConnell 2009; Rees and Smith 2022; Ari *et al.* 2024). Political effect, therefore, is not a property of the terrorist event itself, but an outcome of the process that develops after it is carried out.

The basic assumption of the model is as follows: a terrorist event is a necessary, but not a sufficient, condition for the emergence of political effect. It initiates a process, but it does not independently determine its scope, direction, or intensity. Political effect arises in the space of mediation between the immediate act of political violence and the political consequences that follow it (Kydd and Walter 2006; Abrahms 2006). In this space, three groups of determinants operate: institutional, political, and social.

Institutional determinants refer to the capacity, structure, and mode of response of state institutions after a terrorist event. They include the effectiveness of the security system, the degree of coordination among institutions, the legal and strategic framework for counterterrorism, crisis-management capacity, and the institutional resilience of the state (Đorić and Obrenović 2024; Christensen, Lægreid and Rykkja 2015). Their relevance extends beyond the immediate operational response, since institutional reactions may shape the scope and form of the political consequences that develop after an attack. Depending on the institutional context and the nature of the response, a terrorist event may lead to substantial legislative and organizational reforms or, alternatively, to more limited adjustments within the existing legal and institutional framework (National Commission on Terrorist Attacks upon the United States 2004; Boin, 't Hart and McConnell 2009; Petrović and Rašković Talović 2024).

Political determinants refer to the way in which political actors define a terrorist event, interpret the nature of the threat, and choose the measures that will follow it (Kydd and Walter 2006; Bali 2007; Montalvo 2011; Ari *et al.* 2024; Pavličević 2025; Volker 2024). They include the process of political decision-making, parliamentary and governmental responses, legislative initiatives, the selection of public policies, foreign policy positioning, and the degree of political consensus or conflict. Within these determinants, a terrorist event may be defined as a limited security incident, an attack on the constitutional order, a trigger for reform of the security system, or a basis for a broader change in political direction (Boin, 't Hart and McConnell 2009; Ari *et al.* 2024;

Volker 2024). Precisely for this reason, political determinants play a central role in transforming a terrorist event into a politically relevant process.

Social determinants include the ways in which the public, the media, and the broader social context respond to a terrorist event. They are manifested through media representation of the attack, the formation of public opinion, perceptions of the level of threat, the level of fear, social mobilization, trust in institutions, and public readiness to accept certain political measures (Kearns, Betus and Lemieux 2019; Glazzard and Reed 2021; Oswald, Furst and Johann 2023; Amarasinghe 2023; Epifanio, Giani and Ivandic 2023; Kantorowicz, Kantorowicz-Reznichenko and de Vries 2025). Social determinants usually do not produce political decisions directly, but they shape the space in which such decisions are made. They may intensify political pressure, legitimize extraordinary measures, limit political radicalization, or direct public debate toward questions of responsibility, solidarity, or the preservation of the democratic order.

The proposed model does not assume that these three groups of determinants operate separately. On the contrary, political effect emerges through their interaction. Institutional capacities influence political decision-making; political decisions shape social reactions; and social reactions, in turn, act upon political actors and institutions. Political effect is therefore not the sum of institutional, political, and social reactions, but the result of their mutual interaction within a concrete context.

Conceptually, the model can be represented as a relationship among five analytical categories: the terrorist event, institutional determinants, political determinants, social determinants, and political effect. The terrorist event represents the initiating condition; institutional, political, and social determinants represent the mediating mechanism; and political effect represents the dependent outcome. The basic logic of the model may be presented as follows:

*terrorist event → institutional, political, and social
determinants → political effect*

This representation should not be understood as a one-directional and mechanical causal scheme. Its purpose is to show that political effect is not derived directly from the attack itself, but from the way in which the terrorist event is institutionally processed, politically defined,

and socially interpreted. In other words, the model does not explain why a terrorist attack was carried out, but how it becomes politically significant.

The value of the proposed model does not lie in introducing new elements into the study of terrorism, but in connecting existing elements in a different analytical way. Institutions, political actors, the media, and the public are already present in various studies of terrorism; however, in this model, they are not treated as a secondary context, but as the mediating mechanism that shapes the political effect of a terrorist event. In this way, the terrorist event acquires the status of an analytical constant, while the political effect is treated as a variable outcome to be explained.

The selection of institutional, political, and social determinants does not rest on the assumption that these are the only factors capable of influencing the political consequences of a terrorist event. Economic, cultural, historical, and international circumstances may undoubtedly play an important role in particular cases. However, in the proposed model, they are not singled out as separate analytical categories because they do not represent the immediate mechanisms through which a terrorist event is translated into political effect. Rather, they operate indirectly, through institutional capacity, political decision-making, and the social interpretation of the event.

Such differentiation allows the model to remain sufficiently broad to encompass different political contexts, while also remaining sufficiently precise so as not to become an unlimited list of all possible factors. Its analytical value lies precisely in isolating those determinants that directly mediate between the terrorist event as the initial analytical unit and the political effect as the outcome to be explained.

A model formulated in this way enables the comparative analysis of different terrorist events. If two or more attacks have similar immediate characteristics but different political consequences, the explanation cannot remain at the level of describing the attacks themselves. It is necessary to examine the institutional capacities, political decision-making, and social reactions that followed them. This analytical shift constitutes the basis for the empirical examination of the model in the following section.

METHODOLOGICAL FRAMEWORK AND EMPIRICAL EXAMINATION OF THE MODEL

The empirical examination of the proposed analytical model is based on a qualitative comparative analysis of three terrorist events: the attacks in the United States on September 11, 2001, the attacks in Madrid on March 11, 2004, and the attack in Norway on July 22, 2011. These cases were selected because they represent terrorist events of high intensity, strong public impact, and considerable security significance, yet they produced different political effects. It is precisely this difference that makes it possible to test the basic assumption of the paper: that political effect is not a direct consequence of the terrorist event itself, but the result of the interaction between institutional, political, and social determinants.

The analytical unit in the research is not the terrorist organization, the state, or the security system, but the individual terrorist event. Each case is analysed by applying the same analytical framework: first, the immediate characteristics of the attack are identified, and then the institutional, political, and social determinants that shaped its political effect are examined. This ensures the comparability of different cases without reducing their political consequences to the number of victims, the type of target, or the mode of execution.

For the purposes of the analysis, political effect is understood as a set of political changes that can reasonably be linked to the terrorist event under examination. These changes may be normative, institutional, political, or strategic. Normative changes include amendments to laws and other regulations; institutional changes include the establishment of new bodies or the reorganization of existing institutions; political changes include electoral outcomes, changes in public policy, and shifts in political decision-making; while strategic changes include changes in the security, defence, or foreign policy of the state. These forms do not constitute a hierarchy of political effects, but rather an analytical framework for their identification and comparison.

The analysis focuses on immediate and medium-term political effects that can be reasonably attributed to the terrorist event under examination. Long-term political changes are not the direct subject of this paper, because over a longer period, numerous independent economic, international, electoral, and institutional factors become involved in the

political process. This limitation is necessary in order to avoid excessive attribution of later political changes to a single terrorist event.

The operationalization of the model is based on linking each analytical category with appropriate indicators, data sources, and methods of analysis. The terrorist event is analysed through the number of victims, the type of target, the means of execution, and the responsibility for the attack. Institutional determinants are examined through legislative changes, institutional reforms, and organizational changes. Political determinants are analysed through government decisions, parliamentary measures, changes in public policy, and foreign policy activities. Social determinants are examined through media reporting, public opinion, social reactions, and the level of trust in institutions. Political effect is established through a synthetic analysis of all the above sources, as an outcome encompassing institutional, political, and social changes after the terrorist event.

This operationalization ensures that all cases are analysed according to the same criteria. Its function is not merely descriptive, but methodological: it enables the verifiability of the procedure, the clear separation of analytical categories, and the comparability of the results of the comparative analysis.

In the case of the terrorist attacks in the United States on September 11, 2001, the immediate security effect was exceptionally high. The attack produced a large number of victims, a powerful symbolic shock, and a profound change in the public perception of security (National Commission on Terrorist Attacks upon the United States 2004, 285–315). However, its ultimate political effect did not arise solely from the intensity of the attack, but from the way in which it was institutionally, politically, and socially processed. Institutionally, profound organizational and normative changes followed, including the reform of the homeland security system, the establishment of new institutions, and the expansion of the powers of state authorities in the field of counterterrorism (Homeland Security Act 2002; National Commission on Terrorist Attacks upon the United States 2004). Politically, the attack was defined as a strategic threat requiring a comprehensive change in security and foreign policy (The White House 2002, sec III). Socially, a high level of mobilization, a sense of vulnerability, and broad support for stricter security measures created a framework within which far-reaching political decisions received strong legitimacy (Glazzard and Reed 2021;

Boin, 't Hart and McConnell 2009). For this reason, the political effect of this case was systemic and transformational in character.

The attacks in Madrid on March 11, 2004, demonstrate a different mechanism through which political effect is produced. Although they too represented a severe terrorist event with a large number of victims and strong public impact, the political effect was not manifested through a profound institutional reform of the security system (Rose, Murphy and Abrahms 2007; Bali 2007). The institutional response was rapid and functional, but it did not constitute the main source of political transformation. The key role was played by political and social determinants, above all, the fact that the attack occurred immediately before parliamentary elections. The way in which the government communicated the nature of the threat, the question of political responsibility, and the reaction of the public influenced the political atmosphere during the electoral period (Bali 2007; Montalvo 2011). Social reactions, mass protests, and the loss of trust in the official interpretation of the event became an important part of the political process (Bali 2007; Glazzard and Reed 2021). The political effect of this case was manifested through a change of government and a reassessment of foreign policy orientation, including the decision to withdraw Spanish forces from Iraq (Rose, Murphy and Abrahms 2007; Montalvo 2011). Unlike the American case, this did not lead to systemic transformation, but to a national political change within a specific electoral context.

The attack in Norway on July 22, 2011, reveals a third pattern. Although the attack was exceptionally severe, with a large number of victims and a strong impact on the public, its political effect remained limited in comparison with the previous two cases. The institutional response was directed toward identifying failures, correcting procedures, and improving capacities, but without a radical change in the constitutional or security order. Political actors did not define the attack as a basis for introducing emergency measures or expanding state powers, but instead emphasized the need to preserve democratic institutions and values (NOU 2012; Christensen, Lægreid and Rykkja 2015). Social reactions were marked by solidarity, trust in institutions, and a rejection of political radicalization (Christensen, Lægreid and Rykkja 2015; Glazzard and Reed 2021). In this case, institutional, political, and social determinants operated in the direction of limiting the political effect, keeping the response within the framework of the existing democratic order (Boin, 't Hart and McConnell 2009; Christensen, Lægreid and Rykkja 2015).

A comparative insight into the three analysed cases shows that the immediate characteristics of a terrorist event do not, by themselves, explain its political effect. All three events had considerable security significance and strong public impact, but they produced different political outcomes. In the United States, the political effect was systemic and transformational; in Spain, it was connected to the electoral process and a change in political course; in Norway, it remained limited and oriented toward institutional corrections without broader political transformation.

These results confirm the analytical value of the proposed model. Differences in political outcomes can be explained more consistently by the way in which institutional, political, and social determinants mediated between the terrorist event and political effect than by the immediate characteristics of the attack itself. The American case shows how the mutual operation of institutional reform, the political definition of the threat, and social mobilization can produce systemic transformation. The Spanish case shows how political context and public reaction can turn a terrorist event into an immediate factor of electoral and foreign policy change. The Norwegian case shows how institutional stability, political restraint, and social insistence on democratic values can limit political effect even after an exceptionally severe attack.

Table 1 summarizes the main findings of the comparative analysis across the three selected cases.

Table 1. Comparative Analysis of political effects in the three selected cases

Analytical category	United States, 2001	Spain, 2004	Norway, 2011
Institutional determinants	Profound institutional reforms	Limited institutional changes	Institutional continuity and corrections
Political determinants	Change in security and foreign policy	Change of government and foreign policy orientation	Preservation of the democratic political framework
Social determinants	High mobilization and support for security measures	Public pressure and the question of political responsibility	Social cohesion and trust in institutions
Political effect	Systemic transformation	National political change	Limited political effect

Source: Authors' compilation.

The comparative analysis conducted in this paper shows that the proposed model has explanatory rather than predictive value. Its purpose is not to predict in advance the political consequences of a terrorist event, but to enable a consistent explanation of how those consequences arise. In this sense, the model makes it possible to analyse the political effect of a terrorist event as a distinct outcome mediated by institutional, political, and social determinants.

CONCLUSION

The starting point of this paper was that the political significance of a terrorist event cannot be explained exclusively by its immediate characteristics. The number of victims, target selection, mode of execution, and symbolic value of the attack undoubtedly determine its security significance, but they do not always explain its ultimate political effect. Terrorist events of similar operational intensity may produce different political consequences, which indicates that there is no direct and linear relationship between an act of political violence and its political outcome.

For this reason, the paper proposed an analytical model that separates the terrorist event and the political effect as two distinct categories of scientific analysis. The terrorist event is treated as the initial analytical unit, while the political effect is treated as the outcome to be explained. Between these two categories lies a space of mediation in which institutional, political, and social determinants shape the scope, direction, and intensity of political consequences.

The main theoretical contribution of the paper lies in shifting the analytical focus from the terrorist event itself to the processes that unfold after it. The paper does not call into question the significance of existing theories of terrorism, nor does it seek to offer a general theory of terrorist violence. On the contrary, it builds upon their insights, but defines the object of inquiry more narrowly: it does not examine why terrorism emerges, how terrorist organizations operate, or which strategies they use, but rather how an individual terrorist event acquires political significance.

The empirical examination of the model, based on a comparative analysis of the attacks in the United States in 2001, Madrid in 2004, and Norway in 2011, showed that different political outcomes cannot be sufficiently explained by the immediate characteristics of the attacks

themselves. In the American case, the political effect acquired a systemic and transformational character; in the Spanish case, it was connected to the electoral process, a change of government, and a reorientation of foreign policy; while in the Norwegian case, it remained limited, with the preservation of the democratic political framework and institutional continuity. These differences confirm that the political effect of a terrorist event depends on the way institutions respond, political actors define the threat, and society interprets and evaluates the event itself.

The scientific contribution of the paper lies in three mutually connected levels. The first is conceptual and concerns the analytical separation of the terrorist event and the political effect. The second is methodological and consists of the formulation of a model that treats political effect as the outcome of the interaction between institutional, political, and social determinants. The third is empirical and derives from the application of the model to three comparatively selected cases, demonstrating that the proposed framework allows for a more consistent interpretation of the different political consequences of terrorist events.

The scope of the proposed model should be understood precisely. It does not have a predictive function and does not make it possible to reliably forecast the political consequences of future terrorist events. Its value is explanatory: the model enables a systematic analysis, after a terrorist event has occurred, of the mechanisms that led to a particular political outcome. At the same time, the model does not exhaust all possible factors that may influence the political consequences of terrorism. Economic, international, cultural, and historical circumstances may be significant, but within this framework, they are treated as indirectly present through institutional, political, and social determinants.

The proposed analytical model should therefore be understood as a basis for further comparative research into the political consequences of terrorist events. Its application to a larger number of cases, different political systems, and different historical periods could contribute to a more precise understanding of the conditions under which a terrorist event acquires a limited, national, or systemic political effect. In this sense, the main contribution of the paper does not lie in the claim that a terrorist event necessarily produces a particular political outcome, but in showing that such an outcome can be scientifically analysed only if the terrorist event and the political effect are clearly separated, and if the relationship between them is explained through mediating institutional, political, and social mechanisms.

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ОД ТЕРОРИСТИЧКОГ ДОГАЂАЈА ДО ПОЛИТИЧКОГ ЕФЕКТА: АНАЛИТИЧКИ МОДЕЛ ПОЛИТИЧКИХ ПОСЛЕДИЦА ТЕРОРИЗМА****

Резиме

У раду се анализира однос између терористичког догађаја и његовог политичког ефекта, полазећи од претпоставке да непосредне карактеристике терористичког напада, као што су број жртава, избор циља, начин извршења и симболичка вредност нападнутог објекта, не представљају довољно објашњење његових политичких последица. Циљ рада је формулисање аналитичког модела који политички ефекат терористичког догађаја објашњава као исход интеракције институционалних, политичких и друштвених детерминанти. Модел је емпиријски испитан компаративном анализом три случаја: терористичких напада у Сједињеним Америчким Државама 11. септембра 2001. године, напада у Мадриду 11. марта 2004. године и напада у Норвешкој 22. јула 2011. године. Сва три случаја анализирана су према истом оквиру који обухвата институционалне реакције, политичко дефинисање

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претње, друштвене реакције и настале политичке последице. Резултати показују да слична тежина терористичког догађаја не доводи увек до истог обима и типа политичких последица. У Сједињеним Америчким Државама напад је био праћен дубоким институционалним и нормативним променама, реорганизацијом система унутрашње безбедности и променама у безбедносној и спољној политици. У Шпанији је политички ефекат био снажно повезан са изборним контекстом, реакцијом јавности и питањем политичке одговорности, што је допринело промени власти и преиспитивању спољнополитичког курса. У Норвешкој је, упркос тежини напада, политички ефекат остао ограниченији и усмерен на институционалне корекције, уз очување демократског политичког оквира и висок ниво друштвене кохезије. Компаративна анализа показује да политички ефекат није директна и механичка последица напада већ зависи од начина на који институције реагују, политички актери дефинишу претњу, а јавност и медији интерпретирају догађај. Предложени модел има пре свега објашњавајућу функцију и може представљати основу за даља компаративна истраживања политичких последица терористичких догађаја.

Кључне речи: тероризам, терористички догађај, политички ефекат, политичке последице, институционалне детерминанте, политичке детерминанте, друштвене детерминанте, безбедносна политика, компаративна анализа

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